

# PRESENT TENSE

MAY 2003

the newsletter for CAP public affairs officers



**CIVIL AIR PATROL**  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

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Virginia Wing PAO Linda Utting rose to the occasion when Brig. Gen. Dave Clary arrived on her doorstep for a CAP glider ride. **Page 2**

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### 'CAP NEWS BLUES'

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*Present Tense* is the official monthly publication for public affairs officers of the Civil Air Patrol, and is produced by Melanie LeMay in the Strategic Communications and Planning Directorate, CAP National Headquarters, Maxwell AFB, Ala. All copy is written by Melanie LeMay unless otherwise noted.

Is there something you'd like us to cover in *Present Tense*? Contact Melanie LeMay at [mleamay@capnhq.gov](mailto:mleamay@capnhq.gov) or call her at (334) 953-5320.

Use national news to your benefit

## Localize the story



Photo by Col. John P. Swain, CAP

**Maj. Gen. Bowling's meeting with Secretary Tom Ridge** (right) during the same week as the National Congress on Aviation and Space Education in Cincinnati provided an additional draw for local media coverage.

Editors love local angles on major news stories; give them what they want, but only if it's truly relevant

**Melanie LeMay**  
*Public Relations Specialist*

CAP's recent aerospace education conference in Cincinnati (the National Congress on Aviation and Space Education) had all the elements of a media draw: creative photo ops (a full-size model of a 1902 Wright glider along with live Orville and Wilbur look-alikes), big-name speakers (Erik Lindbergh, Gus McLeod) and story angles ranging from high-tech education to helping at-risk youth.

Pre-publicity for the event included a list of those possible story angles and the photo ops.

And then we went to war with Iraq.

Suddenly, those salable education and youth-at-risk angles didn't seem so important. Photos of old aircraft paled beside those of bombers over Baghdad.

When the media is distracted by a huge national event, there are two rules of thumb. First, see if anything in your story relates to the big national story in any way. Second, don't use the national story as an excuse to stop pitching, even if your topics are totally unrelated to the day's big news.

As it turned out, on the day before NCASE began, CAP leaders, including Maj. Gen. Rick Bowling, met with Secretary Tom Ridge of the federal Office of Homeland Security to discuss CAP's role in the new department's strategies. Since Gen. Bowling was coming straight to NCASE after this meeting in Washington, we used that carrot to entice Cincinnati media to come out and interview him. In the process, he was able to plug NCASE and talk a little about CAP's aerospace education mission.

See **Localize**, page 4

# Rising to the challenge

## Iowa PAOs handle unexpected media blitz when CAP plane goes down

It's the unexpected events that can catch a PAO off-guard. Iowa PAOs handled the media expertly, however, after a recent CAP plane crash in their area resulted in the death of Chaplain, Maj. Christie Battle and injuries to another CAP pilot.

By the time CAP members reached the scene of the crash, local TV and newspaper reporters and photographers were already onsite. Local law enforcement officials taped off the area and confiscated one photographer's film. According to Iowa Wing Commander Col. Russell Smith, local authorities maintained "perfect control of the scene," making it easier for the PAOs to control the dissemination of

information to the press.

Iowa Wing PAO 1 Lt. Brandon Hanson worked with Smith to contact the necessary CAP officials, including national headquarters public relations. Hanson then began work on an official statement, which he was able to make available to the press within a few hours.

Hanson remained on the scene while officials from the Federal Aviation Authority and the National Transportation Safety Board began their investigations. As he gathered more information, he worked with headquarters PA and his region PAOs, Maj. Dave and Capt. Julia Bachtell, to be sure the information was suitable

for publication.

During this difficult process, Hanson and the Bachtells made sure the hospitalized victim of the crash was aware that he might be contacted by media. They also worked to obtain basic information on Christie Battle and a photo of her to supply to the press. They were able to describe for the press the outstanding work Battle had performed for CAP.

Most important, they refrained from speculating about the cause of the crash and protected the situation so as not to cause undue problems for Battle's or the surviving pilot's families. Their good work also helped maintain the integrity of the investigations.

## Washington Post writes feature on Clary glider flight

It could have been either a PAO's fantasy or his worst nightmare. But for seasoned Virginia Wing PAO Lt. Col. Linda Utting, the convergence of high-ranking Air Force officials on a Virginia Wing cadet glider orientation was just another day in the trenches.

On March 8, Brig. Gen. Dave Clary, USAF director of Homeland Security, Col. Steve Doss, Col. Rich Anderson and Maj. Jim Macko all came to Winchester, Va. to meet CAP members and cadets and see the glider orientation. Utting had done her homework, alerting the press and local officials well in advance that the Air Force brass were scheduled to visit. As a result,

several reporters showed up, including one from the *Washington Post*, along with members of the local county and airport commissions.

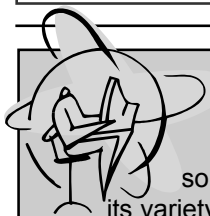
Utting deftly divided her attention among the assembled journalists, making sure they had the information they needed. The result was a long feature story in the Sunday edition of the *Post*, complete with photos, detailing both the glider flights of the day and CAP in general. Clary's association with homeland security was a natural catalyst for the reporter to cover CAP's work in security-related missions.

*Next month: The "Utting Process"*



Photo by Marc Huchette, CAP National HQ

Brig. Gen. Dave Clary embarks on a CAP glider flight March 8, 2003, at Winchester, Va.



## Cool Web sites for PAOs

**Fact-finding links galore** – Refdesk calls itself the "single best source for facts on the Net." Take a look and you'll probably agree that its variety of links is staggering. According to Ragan Communications' *Corporate Writer & Editor*, Refdesk is Secretary of State Colin Powell's favorite Web site. True or not, Refdesk is a great starting place for everything from recent news stories to statistics to famous quotations. Visit it at [www.refdesk.com](http://www.refdesk.com)

**Abbreviated Code Rarely Or Never Yielding Meaning? – ACRONYM Finder** is a searchable database containing more than 288,000 abbreviations and acronyms, including military acronyms and abbreviations. It also contains acronyms related to computers, technology and telecommunications. (Yes, CAP is there!) Give it a try at [www.acronymfinder.com](http://www.acronymfinder.com)

## LATEST CAP STATS

### CAP Membership as of March 31, 2003

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Cadets       | 27,286        |
| Seniors      | 36,957        |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>64,243</b> |

**Need the latest CAP Fact Sheet?**  
Go online at [www.caphq.gov](http://www.caphq.gov) and click on News and Issues, Inside CAP, and then Tools for PAOs.

*I keep sending articles but I never see them in print*  
*Maybe you have to know somebody to get published*  
*I keep sending articles but I never see them in print*  
*Maybe you have to know somebody to get published*  
*I sent three pages and they printed three sentences*  
*I keep sending articles but I never see them in print*  
*I keep sending articles but I never see them in print*  
*Maybe you have to know somebody to get published*  
*Maybe you have to know somebody to get published*

**Forget the mainstream media ...**

# I just want to break into CAP News!

**Melanie LeMay**

*Public Relations Specialist*

If you've got the "CAP News blues," here's an annotated version of Editor-in-Chief Jim Tynan's rules for submissions. Follow these tips and increase your chances of getting your news into a future issue.

## Submission procedures

### ◆ E-mail preferred

*Jim produces the paper with very little help, so he doesn't have time to rekey stories. Help him out by sending your story via e-mail. Then he can cut and paste the story directly into his layout.*

### ◆ capnews@capnhq.gov ONLY

*Send your articles to the newspaper mailbox to begin with so it won't get lost in all of Jim's company e-mail. Remember, this man is getting e-mail from members all over the country!*

### ◆ Send story in body of e-mail rather than as attachment

*This goes for any story you send to any media outlet. Don't make editors open attachments. If they can't get it open the first time, they may never come back to it.*

◆ **Subject line should include: Unit name, wing and brief description [e.g., "Columbia Comp Sq (SC): Senior member honored for AE contribution"]**

*Again, this is good media relations etiquette. Let the editor know what he's going to see. An informative subject line shows the editor what he's going*

*to see and helps him find the story quickly in a long list of e-mails.*

### ◆ If no e-mail, send via USPS on diskette or CD with printout of copy

*Again, submitting the story on a disk allows the editor to cut and paste the text. A hard copy will tell him at a glance what he's received.*

### ◆ Always include contact info: name, unit/wing, phone, e-mail, etc.

*This is one of those "duh" rules, like always signing your income tax return, that too many of us forget. Always, always include contact information!*

## Digital images/Photos

### ◆ Preferred format is jpg or tif

*These formats are easier to work with and result in files of manageable size.*

### ◆ Min. scan resolution: 203 dpi

*Scan your photos right the first time. Editors on deadline don't have time to ask you to do it over.*

### ◆ Min. pixel resolution: 1280x960

### ◆ Send as attachment to e-mail

### ◆ If no e-mail, send via USPS with photos and copy of story

### ◆ Color and b&w accepted

*Color is better! Editors can always recast your photos into grayscale, but they can't turn a black & white photo into color.*

### ◆ Provide detailed outline info, including description of action, complete identities, photo credits.

*This is critical. Without this information, a perfectly good photo can get knocked out of the running. Include all the pertinent facts in your outline. The editor can always pare it down. Be*

*sure to give the complete name of the person to be credited for the photo.*

## Writing tips

### ◆ Keep it short and simple

*Remember, editorial space is limited, and everybody thinks his own copy is most important.*

### ◆ Provide complete names, ranks, unit names

*Don't be lazy. It's not the editor's job to look up the ranks and correct names of the subjects in your story!*

### ◆ Include date of event/happening

*AP style requires that dates be included in stories and in photo cutlines. Include the year if there's any doubt.*

### ◆ Remember the "45-day rule"

*In other words, old news is no news.*

### ◆ Use byline, when applicable

*If you really did all the work on the story, give yourself credit!*

## Never do's!

*No annotation needed -- just consider these the law!*

### ◆ Never use ALL CAPS

### ◆ Never submit via fax

### ◆ Never send photos as bmps or gifs

### ◆ Never send in five-plus photos; choose the two or three best ones

### ◆ Never send photos inserted into a Word file

### ◆ Never send in just a change/fix; do it yourself and resubmit entire story

### ◆ Never send in more than one release/story per e-mail

# The Detail Diva

*To handle details for an eclectic bunch of PA types requires patience, persistence and a sense of humor*

Donald Trump once observed, "The first thing a secretary types is the boss." As the Detail Diva for her department, however, Diane Long has had to figure out the personality quirks of everybody she works with.

As administrative assistant to Mary Nell Crowe in the headquarters office of strategic communications, Long fields calls from CAP members – and the general public – all day long. As a result, she must know the right contact person for all kinds of questions.

"I get everything from requests for recruiting materials to calls from news reporters," she said. "It's my personal goal to help any and all callers."

And that she does, maintaining the same remarkably calm and cheerful attitude whether she's dealing with CAP members or her colleagues down the hall.

At the same time, Long is the one who

creates those certificates that come from HQ PA. She prepares most everything shipped out nationwide by PA, and still finds time to keep up with Crowe's travel, the department's monthly bills, the clipping service database and helping with visiting VIPs.

A single mom who hails from Lansing, Mich., Long juggles even more details on the home front. Her school-age children Chanel and KeAnne are still living at home, and her grown son and daughter keep in touch from Michigan.

Among the details Long still plans to nail down is a doable schedule of college classes to earn a business administration degree, a realistic and ongoing physical fitness program and a house of her own.

Next time you call the main number for HQ PA and catch Diane Long, you'll know you're talking to one diva who wears her crown lightly.



Photo by Tim Frantz  
CAP National Headquarters

Diane Long shares a laugh with CAP NASCAR driver Ashton Lewis Jr. during his recent visit to national headquarters.

## NEXT MONTH

*Like the NASCAR people she works with, Kelly Riddle races through work with professional skill and precision.*

# New moniker for Marketing and Public Relations

With the "transformation" of national headquarters staff structure that became effective March 31, the Marketing and Public Relations Directorate has been moved under the Strategic Communications and Planning Directorate, headed by Director Don Rowland. The functions formerly directed by Mary Nell Crowe still fall under her jurisdiction, but her department now will be known as

"Strategic Communications" and will not exist as a separate directorate. Crowe's new title is Deputy Director of Strategic Communications.

"We have changed the name of this department so its function won't be misconstrued relative to Department of Defense regulations that preclude reimbursement to us for efforts to sell any type of product," Rowland said. "In

some quarters, the word 'marketing' is synonymous with 'sales,' and we want to be sure it's clear that we're not in a for-profit business."

PAOs in the field generally use terms such as "public affairs," "public relations" and "media relations" in their titles, and these are still good choices.

Membership Development has been moved from Crowe's department to the membership department

under Jim Mallett, and headed by Susie Parker.

According to Rowland, the headquarters transformation was designed to streamline the chain of command in upper management.

Crowe said moving her department under the umbrella of Strategic Communications and Planning should not result in any loss of services to members.

## Localize, continued from page 1

In visiting media offices on the day before the conference opened, we added news of the Ridge meeting to our list of other conference attractions. At least one conference attraction appealed to a WCPO-TV. That night, a cameraman showed up to film the Wright flyer display with our Orville and Wilbur actors. Later in the week, the local FOX News affiliate interviewed Bowling at length about the meeting with Ridge, as well as CAP's involvement in aerospace education.

The most significant coverage, however, was an interview that appeared on

the front of the second section of *The Cincinnati Enquirer* on the Sunday following NCASE. Since the commanding officers of both the Kentucky and Ohio wings were on hand for NCASE, we were able to shepherd them all into one-on-one meetings with the newspaper's reporter. For the reporter, it was the best of both worlds. Bowling was able to discuss homeland security with him from the national (Ridge meeting) angle, and the wing commanders were able to give him a local perspective. Col. Loretta Holbrook of Kentucky Wing even arranged for the reporter to talk to

a Cincinnati-area member who had experience flying CAP missions.

Since the White House had already created a connection in the public's mind between homeland security and the war in Iraq, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reporter was able to develop a unique angle on the national story and throw in some local color as well.

By helping the media capitalize on the big national news with a local angle, we got collateral coverage of NCASE that might otherwise have been knocked out of the running by the media's preoccupation with the war.